

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENNA 03666 061101Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07
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R 060014Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1641
AMEMBASSY BELGADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION OECD PARIS

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PAGE 02 VIENNA 03666 061101Z

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, US, AU
SUBJECT: AFL-CIO SECRETARY-TREASURER KIRKLAND VISITS AUSTRIA

1. AFL-CIO SECRETARY-TREASURER LANE KIRKLAND AND MRS.
KIRKLAND VISITED AUSTRIA APRIL 25-MAY 1 AS GUESTS OF THE
AUSTRIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (ATUF). IT WAS THE

FIRST VISIT OF A TOP AFL-CIO OFFICIAL TO AUSTRIA, AND ATUF PRESIDENT BENYA, WHO HAS HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES AS PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENT AND LIKES TO KEEP HIS REPRESENTATIONAL INVOLVEMENT TO A MINIMUM IN TRADE UNION VISITS, WENT ALL OUT FOR THE KIRKLANDS. HE HOSTED THE ARRIVAL DINNER APRIL 25, ATTENDED THE

OPERA AND HOSTED SUPPER APRIL 26, PARTICIPATED IN SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS AT PARLIAMENT APRIL 27, AND HOSTED DINNER AGAIN APRIL 28. CHARGE GAVE A LUNCHEON FOR KIRKLAND APRIL 28 WHICH WAS ATTENDED, AMONG OTHERS, BY MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS WEISSENBERG. A TRIP TO SALZBURG OCCUPIED THE LAST TWO DAYS OF THE VISIT.

2. KIRKLAND HAD SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS, WHICH THE EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHE ATTENDED, WITH CHANCELLOR KREISKY AND, AT THE CHARGE'S LUNCHEON, WITH MINISTER WEISSENBERG, IN ADDITION TO THOSE WITH BENYA AND OTHER ATUF OFFICIALS AND TRADE UNION LEADERS. KIRKLAND ALSO DELIVERED A PUBLIC LECTURE APRIL 27 ON AFL-CIO POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (SPONSORED BY THE AUSTRIAN FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION), VISITED VARIOUS ATUF FACILITIES, AND LECTURED AT THE ATUF SCHOOL IN VIENNA.

3. IN HIS MEETING WITH KIRKLAND, KREISKY SPOKE STRONGLY IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, STRESSED HIS OWN PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE WITH SOVIET, INDIAN, AND OTHER LEADERS ON BEHALF OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 VIENNA 03666 061101Z

VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS, AND NOTED THAT EACH COUNTRY MUST WORK IN ITS OWN WAY AND AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL TO ACHIEVE DESIRED ENDS. THE LAST HALF-HOUR OF THE 45 MINUTE DISCUSSION WAS DEVOTED TO AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST. KREISKY NOTED THAT THE VIEWS HE WAS EXPRESSING WERE PRECISELY THOSE HE HAD SET FORTH AT THE RECENT ISRAELI LABOR PARTY CONGRESS.

4. WEISSENBERG DISCUSSED ILO ISSUES AT LENGTH, SOLICITED THE AFL-CIO POSITION ON U.S. WITHDRAWAL, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE SOLIDARITY OF FREE TRADE UNION DELEGATES AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS, IN SPITE OF CONTRARY MAJORITIES IN THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, WOULD BE SUFFICIENT REASON FOR THE UNITED STATES TO REMAIN A MEMBER. OTHERWISE, HE SAID, THIRD WORLD LABOR MOVEMENTS WOULD BE INCREASINGLY AT THE MERCY OF THE COMMUNISTS, EUROPEAN INTEREST IN THE ILO WOULD DIE, AND THE ILO WOULD COLLAPSE. ANY ILO WAS BETTER THAN NO ILO, WEISSENBERG SAID, BUT KIRKLAND DID NOT AGREE. KIRKLAND

SAID THE AFL-CIO WOULD NOT COMPLETE ITS ASSESSMENT OF ILO DEVELOPMENTS UNTIL AFTER THE JUNE CONFERENCE, BUT INDICATED IT WAS NO SECRET THAT AS GOES THE AFL-CIO, SO GOES THE USG.

5. BENYA AND KIRKLAND DISCUSSED EAST-WEST TRADE UNION VISITS AT SOME LENGTH. BENYA SAID HE WOULD INVITE A THOUSAND COMMUNIST LABOR OFFICIALS TO VISIT AUSTRIA IF POSSIBLE, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THEY WERE REALLY COMMUNIST PARTY FUNCTIONARIES BUT BELIEVING THAT, EXPOSED TO REALITIES IN THE WEST, THEY COULD NOT BUT BEGIN TO QUESTION THEIR OWN ACTIONS AND SYSTEMS AT HOME.

6. LABOR ATTACHE LOOKS FORWARD TO DISCUSSING KIRKLAND VISIT WITH INTERESTED STATE AND LABOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS WHILE IN WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATIONS MAY 9-17. MEEHAN

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